

Report of the 1999 Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) Working Group Meeting

INTRODUCTION

- .1 The Arctic Council Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response working group held its meeting in Svalbard, Longyerbyen, 8-10 September 1999.
- .1 The meeting was attended by delegations from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the US and the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat. A list of participants is attached to the report (Annex 1).
- 0.3 Mr. Olli Pakkala from Finland acted as chair for the meeting.
- 0.4 Mr. Jan Nerland from Norway wished all the delegates welcome to Svalbard and hoped for a good and prosperous meeting. Mr. Kjell Kolstad from Norway informed the meeting of some practical arrangements.

AGENDA

Agenda item 1 Opening of the meeting

The chair opened the meeting and hoped that the meeting and the discussions at the meeting would be to every bodies satisfaction.

Agenda item 2 Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with some small changes to the sequence of the items (Annex 2). A list of documents concerning the items on the agenda is attached (Annex 3).

Agenda item 3 The Arctic Council

3.1 Work of the Arctic Council and the SAOs

The chair presented the documents concerning the last SAO meeting in Anchorage in May 1999. Present at the EPPR meeting was also the Swedish SAO, Ms. Kettis, who presented the latest SAO news concerning the Sustainable Development work, AMAP and ACAP, also the Arctic University was mentioned. She also stressed the importance of co-operation between the working groups.

The US informed the meeting of the preparations of the upcoming SAO meeting in November. A meeting between the working group chairs is also planned during the SAO meeting.

The Northern Dimension of the European Union was also mentioned and the question was raised how the Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension can benefit from each other. The EU might in the future be more active also in Arctic issues.

3.2 Other working groups and activities

Concerning the activities of PAME information was given on the Regional Plan of Action, Arctic off shore guidelines, Code of Polar Navigation and their project on shipping activities in the Arctic. Also a draft of Oil and gas exploration and production in Arctic and subarctic offshore regions - guidelines for environmental protection by IUCN was presented. This report had been given to PAME for comments.

The EPPR working group discussed the overlap of the work of PAME and EPPR on prevention of pollution. It was stated that the non-accidental pollution should be part of the activities in PAME and the accidents and accidental pollution should be part of EPPR activities. Some countries mentioned the discussions on leaving the prevention part away from EPPR activities. This would however need further and deeper discussions.

Decision: EPPR asked the chair to prepare, in co-operation with the PAME chair Mr. Karau, a discussion paper which would define the areas of possible overlap in the activities of the two groups. The paper should also discuss options for co-operation and sharing of responsibilities in ongoing and future projects.

The chair informed the meeting that he had attended the AMAP meeting in December 1998 in Helsinki. He had informed AMAP of the EPPR Strategic Plan of Action and also of the Circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spill in the Arctic.

Some additional information was given concerning the activities of the Radioactivity group of AMAP. They have a project which will be finalised in 2002 and this project might reflect in the work of EPPR.

Concerning ACAP the chair presented the document on ACAP and also possible EPPR contributions to ACAP. It was stated that ACAP is not a working group but a programme developing an action plan for the Arctic Council and therefore it is supposed to cover all different activity areas in the Arctic Council.

The EPPR working group asked Mr. Tracy Hall from the US to present, at the forthcoming ACAP Workshop, the outcome of the considerations of EPPR's role in the preparation of the Arctic Council Action Plan. The EPPR working group and its members can contribute to issues related to prevention of accidental pollution involving heavy metals and radioactive substances, which are two of the priority group of substances in ACAP.

Agenda item 4. Information

4.1 Information exchange

Canada

1. Canada has had a national exercise CANATEX 3 in April 1999. One of the aims of the exercise was to evaluate the Federal Nuclear Emergency Plan and its interfaces with the nuclear emergency arrangements of the Province of Ontario. A final report from the exercises is not yet available but will be distributed to interested parties.

2. April 1, 1999, Nunavut became a separate territory. Discussions will be undertaken to determine the role of the Nunavut government in EPPR and other working groups.

3. The AMOP meeting occurred and further information can be obtained from Environment Canada.

4. The Canadian Coast Guard is preparing an Arctic Response Strategy. A presentation on this work will be given at the next EPPR meeting.

Denmark

1. The responsibility for the contingency organisation in relation to oil and chemical spills at sea in Danish and Greenlandic waters, which now lies under the Ministry of Environment and Energy will be transferred to the Ministry of Defence on 1st January 2000.

2. The Mineral Resources Administration for Greenland was during late 1998 and early 1999 transferred to the Government of Greenland, Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum.

3. There has been no on- or offshore oil drilling activities in Greenland in 1999. It is expected that offshore exploratory drilling will take place at the Fylla Bank in 2000. The companies drilling will have responsibility for response actions there.

Finland

1. Information on a rail tanker accident with Russian crude oil cargo that had happened in April 1999 was given. In the response actions a Lori Oil Recovery Bucket developed at the Finnish Environment Institute was used for the first time. The tool proved to be very efficient.

2. Finland has a new act on rescue services from the beginning of September 1999. This act also takes into account the environmental aspects of preparedness and response.

Norway

1. Mr. Brandvik from the University Courses at Svalbard (UNIS), informed about the present situation of the MORICE-project and gave a general information about work and studies at the University. He informed that the EPPR Field Guide is used in the lecturing at the University.

As a result of this information the EPPR working group asked Norway, together with UNIS, to study the possibility of developing a training course on oil spill response in ice techniques for responders from Arctic countries. The course could be based on the present UNIS education courses.

2. Norway also informed about a British trawler which had run aground in 1998 at Svalbard close to Longyearbyen. There had been a small leak but most of the fuel oil was transferred from the tank to a recovery vessel.

3. The co-operation between Norway and Russia based on bilateral agreements in the Barents Sea Oil Pollution project continues with an exercise which was conducted in the waters of Murmansk in August 1999.

Russia

1. Russia was very happy for the EPPR Field Guide for Oil Spill Response and informed that it is used in the teaching at the Maritime Academy in St. Petersburg and it will also be translated into Russian.
2. A new Arctic oil tanker, 20 000DWT, has been built and was ready last month.
3. The Barents Sea Oil-project has not yet started but is still in the developing stage.
4. In November there will be a conference in Oslo on the economical, political and technical aspects of the Northern Sea Route. Contingency planning will also be discussed.

Sweden

1. The Defence in Sweden is doing reductions and there has been discussions on how the Coast Guards and the Defence could co-operate.

The United States

1. There will be an International oil and ice workshop in April 2000 in Alaska. One of the goals is to provide an international forum for presentation and discussion of key environmental, operational and logistical topics associated with oil exploration and development in ice prone environments. Further information can be obtained from James McHale or Nick Glover, Alaska Clean Seas +1 907 659 3239 or Gary Thomas, Oil Spill Recovery Institute + 1 907 424 5800, fax + 1 907 424 5820.

4.2 Information on IAEA (US), Information on UNEP-OCHA (Finland)

There was a brief introduction to IAEA given by the US. There was then some discussions concerning radioactivity and the risk of nuclear accidents and how that fits to the EPPR mandate. It was, however, established that the importance of nuclear questions within the work of the Arctic Council is increasing.

Instead of the information on UNEP-OCHA there was given information on the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Coordination Center by Finland and its activities during the earthquake in Turkey in 18 August 1999. Concerning the UNEP-OCHA it was mentioned that there exists a web site with the address www.notes.reliefweb.int/.

Agenda item 5 Ongoing activities of the EPPR working group

5.1 Circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spills in the Arctic (Norway)

The progress report was presented by Norway. Due to some misunderstandings there was unfortunately no representative from Akvaplan-niva but the information given was quite satisfactory. The data from AMAP and CAFF has been obtained and it will be sent out to the liaisons for information and also to be updated. The scope of the project was discussed and it was decided to keep the focus on oil as originally agreed.

The EPPR working group agreed to continue with the development of a GIS-based circumpolar map in accordance with the present time frame but with the following remarks:

- **the project is limited to oil spills but might widen in a future stage to cover other risks,**
- **the depth of the information and data included may vary from country to country,**
- **data on human communities should be presented where relevant and appropriate.**

5.2 Analysis of agreements and arrangements (Canada)

Canada introduced the draft report and the summary of recommendations for consideration by the EPPR meeting. Canada pointed out that these recommendation were not their recommendation but recommendations the countries had given when answering the questions. From the list item 4 and 5 were pointed out as important ones. In the revised report certain parts from the Memorandum of Understanding (agenda item 5.6) can be included.

It was decided that countries can revise and update their national information in the draft report and send these amendments to Canada (Mr. John Shrives) by 15 October 1999. Based on these revisions and the discussions concerning conclusions and recommendations at the meeting, Canada will prepare a revised report and circulate it before 30 November. The report will then be discussed at the next EPPR meeting in June 2000.

5.3 Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the EPPR working group (Finland)

The US in its capacity as Arctic Council chair stated that the operating guidelines should not repeat the Arctic Council Rules of Procedure and therefore they have to be read as a supplement to those. Other delegates also presented some comments and proposed some amendments.

It was decided that Finland will prepare a revised draft based on the discussions at the meeting, taking into account the comments from the US as the Arctic Council chair, which are to be submitted based on a careful comparison with the Rules of Procedure of the Arctic Council. The EPPR chair will also co-operate with the chairs of other Arctic Council working groups. A revised draft of the operating guidelines will be discussed at the next EPPR meeting.

5.4 Arctic Guide (Sweden)

The Guide was presented by Sweden. This is the second updating of the Arctic Guide and after this the updating should be the responsibility of the secretariat.

It was decided that the countries should submit any further improvements and amendments by 15 October to Sweden (Mr. Thomas Fagö). The US promised to study the text and provide comments from the web page use point of view. After these amendments the responsibility of the maintaining and updating of the Arctic Guide will be transferred to the EPPR Secretariat. The guide shall be distributed also to the national contact points mentioned in the guide and sent for information to the SAOs, permanent participants and

5.5 Source control management and prevention strategies for high risk activities in the Arctic (Russia)

Russia presented a report on Russian emergency prevention, preparedness and response. Denmark presented a proposal for an Arctic Environmental Management System project.

It was agreed that the aim should not be to create new Arctic regulations but recommendations because every country has their own system and there are existing international emergency management standards. It was also stated that the existing environmental management systems do not specifically address the special conditions of the Arctic.

The US proposed a demonstration project on Emergency Prevention / Source Control in Russia based on international and industry standards.

The EPPR working group decided to endorse the project in principle. The proposal of conducting a demonstration project in Severonickel Processing Plant prevention is subject to confirmation by the Russian authorities. The US will, together with the Russian Federation, further develop a more concrete plan and request participation and experts from other Arctic countries. The outcome and experiences of this project will be discussed at a future EPPR meeting at which time the working group will discuss and decide on the possible further steps in this activity area. This means that the project proposal from Denmark will wait till then for further discussions.

5.6 Memorandum of Understanding (Finland)

The discussion paper was presented by Finland. The reactions to the possible Memorandum of Understanding were that as the EPPR working group is not an operational group this does not fit into its mandate. Questions concerning how binding the proposed Memorandum of Understanding would be were also raised. The US stated that a Memorandum of Understanding in their vocabulary means a treaty between the states and therefore needs such procedures.

The EPPR working group did not endorse the proposal to develop a Memorandum of Understanding on the Arctic emergency co-operation. Canada can, however, utilise, as appropriate, elements from the draft MoU when preparing conclusions and recommendations from the analysis of existing agreements and arrangements (agenda item 5.2). The EPPR working group also felt some principles of the draft could be utilised in the ACAP preparations. Principles like how to influence the work of other international organisations from an Arctic perspective.

5.7 Development of an EPPR web site (US)

The US presented the web site and how it has been constructed. All the countries thanked the US for a job well done. The web site contains the links to the national web sites but most of them are still “empty”. For Denmark it is important to have the links both to Greenland and to Denmark. Concerning the financing of the web site the US Department of Energy will cover the cost for one more year.

The US will provide guidance on preparing documents in the proper format for easy addition to the web site. The US will also suggest a strategy to simplify future updating and distribution of the Arctic Guide.

The EPPR working group thanked the US for a valuable work done to prepare the EPPR web page. The meeting agreed that this web site now can be transferred to the Arctic Council page but with the remark that certain national pages are still under development. The EPPR working group asked the countries to provide the US (Mr. Bruce A. Russell, email:barussell@erols.com) with the national information and web page links within two months. The Russian Federation was asked to check the translation into Russian. The question of long term maintenance and updating of the EPPR web site will be discussed in future meetings.

5.8 EPPR brochure (Finland, Sweden)

The EPPR brochure was discussed and commented and further comments were asked to be sent to Finland (Camilla.Strandberg@vyh.fi) by 30 September 1999. Good photographs on Arctic emergencies are also needed.

Agenda item 6 Possible new projects

6.1 Development of a standardised approach to shoreline cleanup assessment technology (SCAT) (Canada)

Canada presented the project proposal and stated that existing material from the US and from Europe would be used and that the final report would be user friendly. The budget for the project would be 100 000 Canadian dollars. The project would be managed as the Field Guide project.

Many of the countries said that they have new recommendations and guidelines for shoreline cleanup. The Arctic is not necessarily taken into account in those. Norway has recently finalised a work on shoreline clean up. A report will be ready in the near future. Norway will translate this report into English and present it at the next EPPR meeting.

The EPPR working group did not fully concur with the Canadian proposal. Canada will, in consultation with the US, arrange an expert workshop on this issues. Based on the outcome of the workshop, Canada will then prepare a more detailed project proposal for consideration at the next EPPR meeting.

6.2 Other projects

The project proposals for Environmental Managements Systems and Prevention Strategies were discussed under agenda item 5.5 Source Control Management.

Agenda item 7 Any other business

The question concerning exercises arouse under this agenda item but the meeting reaffirmed its earlier decision that the EPPR working group is not an operational group and therefore exercises will not be conducted.

Agenda item 8 Next meeting

The EPPR 2000 meeting will be held in Iceland and tentatively on 6-8 or 13-15

There may be an additional meeting or informal consultation at the MEPC meeting in London in March 2000.

Agenda item 9

Record of decisions and end of meeting

The Record of Main Decisions was discussed and approved (see bolded texts above).

The chair thanked the participants and most of all Norway for the arrangements and wished that the excursion would be an interesting and memorable trip.

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AGENDA FOR THE 1999 EPPR MEETING

1. Opening of the meeting

1. Adoption of the agenda

3. The Arctic Council

3.1 Work of the Arctic Council and the SAOs

Information and discussion of the recent developments.

3.2 Other working groups and activities

Information and discussions on the co-operation with other working groups and also on the ACAP - Arctic Council Action Plan

4. Information

4.1 Information exchange

The delegations are invited to provide the meeting with information on:

- lessons learned
- new activities in the Arctic areas (drilling, mining)
- major organisational changes in the Arctic countries
- research and development in the Arctic countries
- anything else that might be of interest to the other parties.

4.2 Information on IAEA (US), Information on UNEP-OCHA (Finland)

5. Ongoing activities of the EPPR working group

The lead countries in question are asked to inform the meeting of the state of the ongoing projects. The meeting is asked to consider the issues and decide as appropriate.

5.1 Circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spills in the Arctic (Norway)

Discussion

5.2 Analysis of agreements and arrangements (Canada)

Adoption of final report

5.3 Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the EPPR working group (Finland)

Adoption and submission to the SAOs for approval

5.4 Arctic Guide (Sweden)

Information

5.5 Source control management and prevention strategies for high risk activities in the Arctic (Russia)

Discussion

5.6 Memorandum of Understanding (Finland)

Discussion

5.7 Development of an EPPR web site (US)

Endorsement

5.8 EPPR brochure (Finland, Sweden)

Endorsement

6. Possible new projects

The possible lead countries are asked to present the project and the meeting will consider the issues and decide as appropriate.

6.1 Development of a standardised approach to shoreline cleanup assessment technology (SCAT) (Canada)

Discussions concerning the project proposal

6.2 Other projects

Environmental Managements Systems and Prevention Strategies. Possible other proposals.

7. Any other business

Y2K

8. Next meeting

8. Record of decisions and end of meeting

List of documents for the EPPR 99 meeting

Distributed before the meeting

- 2. Revised draft agenda
- 3.1 SAO meeting in Alaska
- 3.2 Arctic Council Action Plan
- 5.1 Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil Spills in the Arctic
- 5.2 Analysis of the Adequacy and Effectiveness of Existing Arrangements
- 5.3 Draft Operating Guidelines
- 5.6 Discussion paper for a possible Memorandum of Understanding
- 5.7 EPPR Web page
- 5.8 Draft text for the EPPR brochure
- 6.1 Arctic shoreline cleanup assessment manual
- 6.3 Draft proposal Safety and environmental management systems
- 6.3 Discussion paper on Source control management and prevention strategies for high-risk activities in the Arctic